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593 688 152 at the time that it was to his clan as though she had killed a strong man. Her husband said nothing, but hurried her to a mission on a nearby island to shield her against possible attacks of his own people. He risked being injured himself for this, but he was more concerned for her. This was not merely because of her economic or child-bearing value. He had an older wife, who had borne him a daughter, whom he loved even more than his younger wife; and the older woman was still a sexual mate and a very able food-gatherer. Yet he told me he would have let them kill the old woman, for she was "rubbish," but that he liked the young galle "too much" and he could not let them kill her.

593 578 837 One further instance may be cited. One of Benaitjimaloi's three wives, the oldest, was notorious for her promiscuity. She had not only been beaten by him, but at one time all the people of a camp had thrashed her for her misconduct. Benaitjimaloi had acquired her by a runaway union. She had been caught in a sexual relation with Bindjerpuma. The husband fought the lover and then said to everybody that he was tired of her continual affairs, was through with her, and that she could go where she pleased. Then he gave her a thorough beating. One of the older men in the tribe, and one of the most intelligent, said, "He won't give her away. I see inside his head. He beat her after he said he'd thrown her away; that shows that he likes that woman too much." Benaitjimaloi kept his wife.

595 484 342 462 A man and all his wives live in the same camp. If he is going on a long journey he usually leaves some of them with their parents, taking only one with him. When a house is to be built the women usually construct the ordinary windbreak type, but sometimes a man helps them. The husband brings in the heavy stringy bark for the small, dome-shaped house used by most of the people during the rainy season. The women keep the house clean. It is felt that the house belongs to the man and the women.

595 578 The wives live in a fair degree of amiability, but there is sometimes jealousy over their husband.

Dorng, a man past middle age, but still very active, had three wives, of whom Opossum was the youngest. He complained one day:

"My wives growl at each other all the time. The two old ones are good friends, but they are jealous of Opossum. They say to her, 'Why don't you get another man? This man is our husband. He made our children come. He belongs to us. He doesn't belong to you.' Opossum says, 'Where am I to go? My other dué are too old; I'd be the same as dead if I lived with

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561 591 camp there is a definite recognition of age. They are seen no longer as babies but as growing boys; but if the young men stay in the men's camp after they grow a beard it is then not so much a matter of age grading as such as it is a single status that is being recognized, since they are now at the proper age for marriage. It is marriage which takes males out of the men's camp and puts them in the general camp. The young men's camp recognizes sex, marriage status, and age. A large 561 number of men who are past the adolescence ceremonies, that is, the 591 totem-seeing rituals, continue in the young men's camp because they 885 have yet to obtain a wife. Further proof that marriage is a final 484 criterion of status is found in the fact that men who travel without their women stay in the men's camp, since at that moment they are single men and not to be classed as married. The only deviation from this of which the writer knows is that occasionally a man will stay in a brother's camp if visiting outside his own clan's territory.

561 In the young men's camp the oldest man takes charge and repri- 867 mands all wrongdoers with the assistance of the near relatives of the 869 offending youths. He also gives them instructions and advice about 887 the totemic emblems when they have seen them, and informs them on the tribal mores, tradition, and mythology. At times there may be more than one old man in the men's camp. The division of authority and power is then based on the personalities of the old men, the more dominant achieving a greater control over the boys. Such authority is more explicit here than one finds it in almost any other part of the Murngin behavior, with the possible exception of the ceremonial ritual when the leader decides when and where it shall be held.

224 His near female relatives carry the bones of the animal when a boy makes his first kill. It is supposed to be done for all the animals a male kills until he has a baby. The bones of the animal or bird are painted with red ocher. If a boy kills a turkey or other large bird, he does not pick it up but leaves it, returns to the camp and tells some old man. He does not say the name of the turkey but calls out "Ka-ok," the sound the turkey makes, to tell his listener what has happened so that he can pick it up. If a young man finds a porcupine (echidna), he will not kill it but goes to tell an old man of his find. [262] If it is killed, he cannot eat it. After they have been carried by the women, the bones of the larger animals are put in a basket made by the mother for this purpose. The basket is placed near the camp and no one touches it, for it would anger the relatives of the boy and a fight would follow.

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424 is a possible exception since he alone can exercise his magic; but here
156 too the feeling is not so much of ownership as of having obtained his magical equipment by inherent ability combined with a mystic experience. In the west the magician's power can be passed from father to son, or to some extent from mother's brother to sister's son, and a man can acquire his magical rituals from others; but essentially the concept of magical power is much like our modern concept of talent and ability.

435 The governing principle in the evaluation of objects which will be kept permanently by their owner is the ease with which they can be transported by human carriage or dugout canoe. The amount of labor consumed in their manufacture contributes in some degree to their high value as individual property, and the relative scarcity of an object in nature or in trade also makes its contributions to Murngin economic values; but the final desideratum is the relative ease of transportation
[492] of the article, since this society has no domesticated beast of burden. Metal containers obtained in trade with white missionaries are extremely scarce and highly prized; yet if of very large size they will be given to someone remaining in camp or cut up and put to other uses.

181 The ultimate value is freedom of movement. Basically the largest
484 factor contributing to this value is the shifting food supply which necessitates change of location; but the feeling for change of location permeates the whole society and has become the most positive motivating factor in the thinking of any Australian aborigine, including the Murngin. All the white ranchers and frontier settlers know and have to make allowance for the partially acculturated blacks' uncontrollable desire "to take a walk about," chiefly under the compulsion of movement from place to place but also because of love for homeland and native culture. The desire to go to other places is forever present in the mental constitution of a black's behavior. If he is in his own clan land where he was born and where he grew to maturity—the center of his cultural heritage—he still feels the urge to go to the next horde or food ground. A flexible material culture and a like technological equipment must, and do, form his adaptation to the natural environment.

(For further consideration of this economic problem, particularly from the point of view of the selection or rejection of exotic articles from other cultures, the reader should see Appendix I, Social Change in North Australia.)

181 It might be argued that the factor of transportation did not prevent
796 a luxuriant growth of ceremonial paraphernalia, such as totemic emblems, grave posts, ceremonial objects of dress, etc. Although the native

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only because of warfare, and, conversely, is a decided factor in stimulating open conflict because of the resultant scarcity of women.

The kinship system of the Murngin, with its attendant set of obligations, duties, rights and privileges stated sufficiently often before, tends to enlarge the scope of a two-clan feud to four or possibly all of the clans of the several tribes. The waku-gawel relationship, and also the dué-galle, mari-kutara, and marelker-gurrong relationships express a very strong solidarity; and a man can depend upon any one of these relatives, distributed in eight or more clans besides his own, to come to his assistance. An isolated killing, owing to the strength of the kinship structure, usually results in the whole of northeastern Arnhem Land becoming a battle ground at fairly frequent intervals.

Kinship solidarity extends warfare but also has the opposite tendency: that of limiting its scope when it has reached very large proportions. All the clans are interrelated, and generally many will find their loyalties divided, for the kinship through marriage of certain members of a clan will dictate their helping one faction, while other members will be compelled by the laws of kinship to aid the other side. Since the solidarity of the clan prevents members fighting among themselves, those clans whose loyalties are divided usually try to pacify the warring ones. In a makarata, frequently arranged by them, they will usually be found doing all they can to have this peace-making ceremony end successfully.

Ceremony, Myth, and Warfare

People who gather to celebrate the great totemic ceremonies, such as the Gunabibi, Djungguan, or Narra rites, come from clan territories sometimes hundreds of miles apart. The leaders for the Gunabibi ceremony, for instance, frequently come up through the interior from the headwaters of the Roper River in the south to the mouth of the Goyder. Members from all the tribes in the northern Arnhem Land district attend yearly. A ceremony assumes greater importance the larger the number of people present and the greater the distance they have come. A man always brags about how far he traveled, how many clans he visited on his pilgrimage to invite the various peoples to his circumcision, and how many people attended.

Warfare is in direct opposition to ceremony. It tends to destroy the larger group solidarity and ultimately to reduce the people who are at peace with each other to the clan unit, since only here is there absolute assurance that fighting cannot take place.

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CHAPTER VIII

A SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF MAGIC

Section I. The Problem of Ritual and Magic Presented by the Northern and Southern Areas

Since the northeastern clans share a belief in magic but lack magical techniques and magicians, the people there either are forced to travel to the south and west for treatment by white magicians, such visits being comparatively rare, or resort to other means found within their own area.

In the south and west black and white magicians are found who have definite techniques for curing and for killing.

The social organizations of the two areas are identical; the totemic situation is the same, and in general there is little variation in the culture except for magical practices. With magical treatment absent in the north, the problem arises as to what to substitute for it, since there is the obvious necessity of attempting to cure an ailing man.

Throughout the north there is a general *belief* in black magic, but it is ascribed to sorcerers operating in the south. The relevant northern thinking on illness is not different from that in the southern area where the offending magician is also an outsider of the clan and the near kinship group. The difference is that there is no sorcerer within the northern groups to whom the people can appeal for punitive magic. It is analogous to knowing the effects of heavy artillery but not possessing it. The magical folklore of the north is sufficiently gruesome to cause the most fearsome apprehension in the minds of people who believe their illnesses caused by such practices.

The two more common accounts of black magical practices believed in throughout the northern Murngin clans and among all the surrounding tribes follow.

1. Two or three magicians follow a man when he is by himself, rush upon him, and throw a spear into him. The man falls down and the others rush upon him. He is in a kind of coma. The mouth cannot move but

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its magical effect, to insure the boys' acquiring many presents on the journey on which they are sent by the older men, and to enable them always to have plenty of good things during their lives. The above quotation is not a formula and is varied according to the speaker.

The two boys, with a near relative such as an older dué (sister's husband, father's sister's son), are sent out (at times this does not occur), usually on separate paths, to visit the various relatives and clans to invite them to the coming ceremony. The relatives of the boys who are present at the time they are sent away and who belong to outside clans are always desirous that the initiates visit their clans. The father chooses a trail for the boy to follow, but the man who accompanies and protects the boy usually modifies the father's directions to fit the circumstances of the journey.

The neophytes usually stay away a month, but their journey may last two moons, or less than one. If they leave when the moon is full they return when there is a new moon. In later years a man always boasts about the many clans he visited, the great distances he traveled, the long period he was absent on his journey.

The young men are sent away, it is said by the old Murngin men, so that they will meet new people, which is felt to be a good thing, and make lifelong friends among their more distant classificatory relatives. This ritualistic making of friends is not organized among these people as highly as in West Australia, nor does the path followed by the boy occupy as important a place in his later life as it does in West Australian regions.

One Wessel Island boy of the Perango clan went down through Elcho Island, where he visited the clan of that country, through Arnhem Bay and into the country of the Gwiyamil clan.[11] A candidate for initiation from the Wangurri clan went overland to the Barlamomo of Blue Mud Bay.

Before leaving, the boys are given new armlets which are then painted with white clay; white cockatoo feather headdresses are put on them, and their faces are daubed with white paint. Usually a white clay bark band is tied around the forehead. Red ocher and kangaroo fat with a white clay outline are put on the boys' faces. A large hair belt, suspended from which is a painted opossum fur string pubic covering, is put on the initiate for the first time. Before this he has gone completely nude, as do all uncircumcised boys.

Wherever the boy goes on his journey the people are informed of the coming ceremony and invited to attend. All those who are invited give

[11] See the clan and tribal map, page 40.

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part of their agricultural complex. It is probable that tides, currents, birds, and other natural causes introduced several floral species into the north that are part of the raw material used in the technological and economic life of the Murngin. Since the tamarind fruit is known to be edible, these plants, brought in by natural means, occupy the same position in Murngin life as the tamarind.

With the exception of the canoe, sail, mast, tobacco pipe, Malay beard, and tamarind tree, little else was contributed by these traders as a permanent part of Murngin material culture. Their influence on the interior people was far less than that felt by the coastal groups. The dugout, with its sail and mast, has not, even today, penetrated twenty miles inland, except by visits of the coastal people, even though there are large navigable rivers and inland lakes that would support a dugout canoe. The Malay pipe is generally used on the coast and the interior. Very few iron tomahawks ever reached the bush people. The tamarind tree is found only on the coast and the adjacent islands, for the Malay never penetrated the interior parts of Arnhem Land.

Malay Influence on the Social Life of the Murngin.—Although the contributions of Malay civilization to Murngin material culture were not large, the purely social elements added to the aboriginal civilization were still less, and probably of less importance in modifying the other social traits. The chief elements of immaterial culture that were adopted by the eastern Arafuran natives were: (1) a pidgin Malay language that was spoken by a considerable number of natives in all the coastal tribes, but not by all the male members of the society; (2) Malay personal and place names; (3) part of the mast-raising ceremony of the Malay voyagers; (4) a mourning ceremony; and (5) other fragmentary elements, such as folk tales.

A pidgin Malay dialect was spoken by most of the older men among the tribes along the Arafura coast. This language became a lingua franca among the various linguistic groups who border the coast. A man traveling from Cape Don, in the far west, could make himself understood to the people on Groote Eylandt. The language stimulated intertribal communication. The introduction of the dugout canoe, with its sail, also accelerated and intensified the interrelations of the various local groups and dialectic tribes. Anyone who has traveled a few hundred miles in a dugout, with and without sails, quickly comes to the conclusion that a canoe with a sail can average more than double the distance of a canoe depending on paddles for locomotion. The sailing canoe also made it possible for two friendly groups separated by hostile clans to communicate when the intervening peoples were on the warpath. Before this time, with the old bark canoe, it was often necessary to land on unfriendly territory because of the voyager's inability to cover the distance in one day's paddling. Al-

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though the dugout was capable of carrying more people than its predecessor, it did not develop into a war canoe.

The Malays gave all the islands, beaches, bodies of water, peninsulas, and other landmarks names from their own vocabulary, which the natives learned and used in addition to their own. All the locations in the whole territory which were touched by the Malay sailors have Malay as well as native terms. Men who do not know the Malay dialect usually know the Malay place names of a particular district.

Almost all the people of the Arafura country also have Malay personal names. These names were originally given them by the Malays, but they were passed by the natives to their own relatives through the custom of giving a sister's daughter's son, or a son's son, the name of a mother's mother's brother, or a father's father; and in the female line by giving the daughter's daughter or brother's son's daughter the name of a mother's mother or father's father's sister. The Murngin know which are Malay personal and place names and which are aboriginal in origin.

There were no Malay words adopted by the blacks to describe the various social institutions of the Murngin. No clan or local group, as far as the writer could determine, received a Malay name which was used by the black. No kinship term was adopted from the Malay terms, although it might be argued that the word for father (bapa) in Murngin nomenclature, being the same as the Malay word, was taken from the intruders. When it is realized that this same word bapa figures in the more central tribes as a kinship term, and that in some of these kinship systems it means older brother and in other places describes still different relatives, it will be seen that this likeness in the two languages was probably a coincidence. It could just as easily be argued that our word "papa" was taken over by the blacks and used for their word for father, since white civilization had been in contact with aboriginal Australian culture in the south and east for a considerable period of time. A visiting Malay, had he come to the Arafura country later than the white man, might have argued this were he as uncritical as many white theorists in their arguments for the diffusion of culture traits.

The Malays only slightly influenced Murngin mythology. Certain myths seem to have a possible Malay origin, or, if not Malay, then some other outside source, since they do not seem to fit into the general cultural background. For instance, the belief that a man acquires the soul of the man he has killed may be due to the transportation of the head-hunting idea from Indonesia to Australia by the Malay traders. On the other hand, it is also likely that this Indonesian idea came by way of New Guinea and then down to Australia at a much earlier period than this last, Malay contact.

Certain native myths have been somewhat modified to make a place

222 484 Even when they are making for a definite camping ground, aborigines very rarely travel in a straight line. Instead, the journey is made slowly, with deviations to favoured localities which are likely to yield food or game, so that they can hunt as they go. The women and children search for vegetable food as they travel, pausing at intervals to dig yams or other roots, which are put in a "dilly bag" or basket (*bäti*) carried for the purpose. Meanwhile the men are on the lookout for sugar bag (wild honey), opossums, bandicoots (*Isoodon*), native cats (*Dasyurus*), as well as snakes and goannas (*Varanus*) or any other game which they can find. On these journeys nothing comes amiss, and in addition to the quest for food, both men and women pause to gather any materials of use in technological [314] processes, which they may see. The young branches of such [283] trees as *bulgut*, (*Brachychiton paradoxum*), which form an important source of the fibre used for making string, are cut, the bast fibre stripped and tied neatly or rolled up, to be put into their dilly bags for later use. When a "sugar bag" or wild bees' nest is found the honey and even the bee bread is eaten on the spot, unless there is a large [415] amount, when it is carried in a bark trough or a closely [237] woven basket of special type called *timbuka*. The soft black wax is roughly moulded into a ball and carried in this form, to be cleaned and refined later, and used for the mounting of certain spear heads, particularly for *ŋämbi* and *kaiyit* (flint and iron respectively).

[221] 222 512 When the vegetable harvest is at its height, about the middle of the south-east season, and the people are living chiefly on a single staple food which can be harvested readily in one place, the women generally go out in a body.

[476] But at such times, although they work close together, there IS NO POOLING OF RESOURCES; EACH COLLECTS 30 FOOD INDEPENDENTLY, WORKING FOR HER OWN FAMILY OR FAMILY GROUP.

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remembers of how it felt and what it meant to him as an individual; the text referred to presents the norms and modes of the society.

When I arrived in the Murngin country the men who had been on board the sailing vessel with me very quickly spread the news of my arrival among all the people. A number of the older men came to see me. Among them was a man who, I discovered, could speak a fair amount of English. He and I talked. I learned his country was on the mainland farther to the east; although he spoke English his thinking was native; and he considered himself, and was looked upon, as a person of consequence and authority among his people.

Across his chest and on his upper arms were ritual scars from self-inflicted wounds which had been filled with ashes. I judged him to be a man of about 45, possibly a bit older. He told me that his name was Mahkarolla. It was not long until we began our discussions, he telling me about his people and I telling him about mine. He became my best informant. We went out hunting together. We did together many of the things common to the daily life of a Murngin. He took me on my first canoe expedition away from Millingimbi Island to some of the other islands in the Crocodile group where a great ceremony was being held in honor of Bapa Indi, the python totem. It was during this first expedition that we became aware of our mutual dependence and friendship. Thereafter we were constantly together.

The next sections are told by him. I have translated his English, much of it pidgin, and his use of Murngin into standard English and have arranged what he told me in a simple chronology.

"When I Was a Little Boy"

I don't remember myself when I was very little. When I was a little larger I wanted to go to the countries of other clans and see places like Elcho Island and the Goyder River (map, page 40) and see how people lived and what they did and learn their language, but I was too little. All this was before I was circumcised.

I had heard my older brothers and some of the old men talk about Kopang and Macassar and the black men who lived to the west and who talked a language we little children could not understand (pages 453-458). I, too, wanted to go there and see those countries and ride on Macassar prahus which came to see us when the wind was from the East, but I was too little. Some of my brothers and some of the old men had been to those countries and a few of these men, while they were there, had Macassar women for wives. Charli Charli Sit-Down, my older brother, fell to the deck from the mast of a Macassar ship. He broke his back and still lived.

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623 clearly seen that those not represented at the conference were the real insti-
628 gators of the war and that their actions were without tribal sanction.

[202] One old man then suggested sending a messenger with a message stick to the bushmen, who were not represented, to tell them that there would be a great makarata or peace-making ceremony (pages 174-176). Someone replied that this was foolishness for makaratas had been tried and they had failed because the enemies violated the rules. Instead of bringing peace the makaratas had only brought more trouble and greater conflict. Discussion of this point finally brought victory to the one who opposed the makaratas because the antagonism of the coastal people against the inland clans was still very strong and they wanted vengeance as well as peace.

What, then, could be done to stop the fighting? The situation was desperate; drastic efforts must be made. One of the older men said, "Let us stop all war. This killing of our young men is no good. It is better that we have ceremonies all the time and never have war. Let us have a gaingar."

Everyone agreed he was right. The speaker continued, "We will have a spear fight to end all spear fights."

A gaingar is the most deadly form of Murngin warfare. Later I learned that 17 men had been killed in one gaingar. In proportion to the population this meant a higher mortality rate than in all of the battles of World War I. This old man was proposing that today's young men be sacrificed so that the young men of tomorrow could be saved.

I was asked what I thought of the idea. I did not respond for it was too much. I sat there, among a council of the wisest men of a Stone Age culture. In one sense several millenniums separated their civilization from mine. Yet I had been a soldier in a war in which our leaders and those of our allies had said, "This is a war to end all wars," and had sent millions of young men to die with this rallying cry.

The discussion continued. Most of the group were enthusiastically in favor of the gaingar. The minority, Mahkarolla among them, grudgingly agreed.

When the meeting disbanded Mahkarolla and I walked back to my camp. "When I was a boy I saw a spear fight to end all spear fights," he said. "Many men were killed. It was no good. We must not have it. My people did not stop fighting. As you see, we are fighting today just as we did before. Spear fights do not end spear fights."

159 One day Mahkarolla and I started on an expedition with two canoeloads
502 of Murngin men, I to map clan territories, he to visit the sacred pools where
[121 his totems lived. As we sailed in the dugout around the rocky cliffs of
784 Point Napier, across the channel from the English Company Islands, we
778]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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disease, scarcity of food compels the occupants to look for fresh sites.

Well-defined tracks link food-gathering areas and meander in or around jungles and along swamps and creeks wherever there is good hunting. Accompanied by a couple of aboriginal families and a few boys, I followed one of these tracks for about forty miles to where a distant horde had migrated. Men went ahead with their spears, and the women followed with young children, family possessions, and food-gathering dilly-bags. Every little while there was an outbreak of squealing from the women and yelping from the dogs, as a bush rat or other animal was dragged from a hollow log or tree. Occasionally a woman darted off from the track and some miles farther on rejoined the party with a bundle of edible roots or yams.

By sundown we left the bush and came out on a sandy beach on the northern shores of Port Bradshaw, and men and boys were soon lying on the sand waiting for the women to prepare the camps, dig in the sand for fresh water, and cook the shellfish. Once the food was ready, the women took it to their husbands, who shared it with unmarried companions. Darkness comes quickly in the north, and married men settled down with their wives and children around their separate family fires, whilst the unattached males discreetly camped some distance away. Unmarried men always separate themselves from family groups, and any visiting males temporarily without wives stay with the bachelors. Not infrequently married men determine where the bachelors' camp is to be made, and with vivid memories of their own youthful and indiscriminate ways, rigorously enforce this segregation. In the bush, ever-courteous nomads reserved a place for me beside the young men's fire, but never anywhere near a family group, although the youths have sometimes been strangers and the married families well known to me.

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YULENGOR

484 I was awakened by the trilling of a butcher bird, and as the sun tipped the motionless trees we resumed our journey through dew-laden grass. No food had been saved from the night before and sharp eyes were on the look-out for something to eat, but it was not till about ten o'clock that the women cooeed and a halt was made to cook an opossum and two goannas.

The day was uneventful and at sundown we came to a deep crocodile-infested creek about a quarter of a mile wide. As there were no canoes about, I wondered how the crossing [481] was to be made, but without hesitation several youths waded in and swam over with their spears. This is the way all the men would have crossed, but Jirring suggested that he and I wait with my medical equipment and camera till his wives and children arrived with their food and family possessions. [501] They were prepared for the crossing, and had sheets of paper-bark which they stacked in heaps on the water, driving digging-sticks through each stack to hold them together. Small children and bundles of food were then piled on top, older children clung to the sides, and a woman swam beside each pile as she pushed it to the other side. Medicines, camera, and swag were successfully shipped in the same way. Such crossings, with yelping dogs, shrilling women, and squealing children, apparently scare away hungry crocodiles, for they seldom attack, although on this occasion several glided off the mud into the stream as we approached. At dusk we came to the camp of a Blue Mud Bay horde, some distance from the river.

[797] [164] I spent several days in this camp with Yulengor I had not seen before, and was able to treat wounds and ulcers and give hypodermic injections for yaws and gangosa. By day 484 the men stayed under leafy bough shelters, talking, sleeping, 512 and preparing totemic emblems with intricate and artistic 462 designs. Women went food-gathering, and at sundown arrived with loads of firewood and dilly-bags bulging with

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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fern-roots, yams, lizards, and shell-fish. Most of the night was spent in singing and dancing. 484 [512] [462]

Sunrise on the fifth morning saw the camp deserted, for nomads invariably take their leave abruptly. The Blue Mud Bay horde was on its way south, and my party soon set out for Yirrkala.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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immediately emerged in the form of Melville and Bathurst Islands. The Women then made rafts from sheets of paper-bark, drove digging sticks through the sheets to keep them in place, and loaded their few remaining possessions on top. They swam behind these and crossed the eighteen-mile-wide Dundas Strait to Melville Island, and by this method aboriginal women today cross creeks and rivers.

Aboriginals on Melville and Bathurst Islands form a distinct social group and have no intercourse with the adjacent mainland. Nevertheless, Yulengor five hundred miles eastward maintain that their Junkgowa went to these islands and there distributed nomads, totems, and animals. One old man told me (and what he said is accepted generally) that he went to Bathurst Island on a pearling lugger, and in the customary exchange of sacred lore with the islanders they showed him their totemic water-hole, which, they said, was inhabited by two grotesque mythical beings. These creatures had the tails and bodies of snakes, but the heads of men. That was enough for the visitor; although he did not enlighten his hosts, he went back to his own people, and said: 'I know our Junkgowa are there.'